

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 10, 13-15, 17, and 18, and cancel claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8, 9, 16, 21 and 22, as set forth in the listing of claims that follows:

1-9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) A catalytic converter, comprising:

a catalyst substrate comprising a catalyst;

a shell concentrically disposed around said catalyst substrate;

a mat support material disposed between said catalyst substrate and said shell, and concentrically around said catalyst substrate; and

an endcone assembly comprising an inlet end, a conical shaped sidewall extending outwardly from ~~an~~ said inlet end and a shoulder extending from the sidewall, ~~of said endcone assembly to a shoulder of said endcone assembly at an outlet end of said endcone assembly~~, wherein said endcone assembly is circumferentially welded ~~attached~~ to said shell at said shoulder, said endcone assembly further comprising ~~and~~ a mat protection element extending integrally from said shoulder inwardly toward said substrate and at least partially overlying said mat support material about said substrate, ~~away from said sidewall~~, wherein said mat protection element comprises a ~~first~~ protrusion extending outwardly from said mat protection element and contacting said shell.

11. (Previously Presented) The catalytic converter of Claim 10, wherein an end of said mat protection element contacts an edge of said mat support material.

12. (Previously Presented) The catalytic converter of Claim 10, wherein a portion of said mat protection element penetrates a portion of said mat support material.

13. (Currently Amended) The catalytic converter of Claim 10, wherein said mat protection element ~~further~~ comprises ~~a second protrusion~~ multiple protrusions extending outwardly from said mat protection element and contacting said shell for positioning said endcone relative to said shell.

14. (Currently Amended) The catalytic converter of Claim 13, wherein said ~~protrusions first protrusion and second protrusion~~ are each selected from the group consisting of a rib, and a dimple, ~~and combinations comprising one of the foregoing protrusions.~~

15. (Currently Amended) A method for manufacturing a catalytic converter, comprising:

concentrically disposing a catalyst substrate in a shell;

disposing concentrically a mat support material between said catalyst substrate and said shell, and around said catalyst substrate;

forming an endcone assembly comprising an endcone inlet end, a conical shaped sidewall extending outwardly from the endcone inlet end and including a shoulder, and a mat protection element extending integrally from said shoulder, said mat protection element comprising a protrusion extending outward therefrom,

positioning the endcone assembly with said shell so that the mat protection element is concentrically disposed about the substrate and extends inwardly toward the substrate at least partially overlying the mat support material, and so that the protrusion is contacting the shell, and

welding the shoulder circumferentially to the shell to form said catalytic converter

~~securing a shoulder of an endcone assembly to said shell, wherein said endcone assembly comprises a conical shaped sidewall extending outwardly from an inlet end of said endcone assembly to said shoulder of said endcone assembly at an outlet end of said endcone assembly, and a mat protection element extending from said shoulder, away from said sidewall; and~~

~~contacting said shell with a first protrusion extending outwardly from said mat protection element.~~

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 15, further comprising contacting said shell with multiple protrusions ~~a second protrusion~~ extending outwardly from said mat protection element.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 17, wherein said multiple protrusions ~~first protrusion and second protrusion~~ are each selected from the group consisting of a rib, and a dimple, ~~and combinations comprising one of the foregoing protrusions~~.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 15, further comprising contacting a leading edge of said mat support material with said mat protection element.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19, further comprises penetrating a portion of said mat support material with at least a portion of said mat protection element.

21-22. (Cancelled)